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[The Administration](#)

[Constituent Services](#)

[Press Office](#)

[Agenda](#)

[Legislation &
Executive Orders](#)

[Get Involved](#)

[Home](#) > [Press Office](#) > [Press Releases](#) >

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Patrick-Murray Administration Releases Domestic Violence Law Enforcement Guidelines, Participates in the White Ribbon Day Campaign

Governor and Lieutenant Governor engage men and boys in the effort to end violence against women

BOSTON- Thursday, February 12, 2009 - Governor Deval Patrick and Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray both participated in events today to highlight the White Ribbon Day Campaign - an international effort to engage men and boys to help end violence against women. The Administration also today announced the release of updated law enforcement guidelines for responding to domestic violence situations.

"Domestic violence affects all of us, and now, more than ever, we need to end it," said Governor Patrick. "Men, most especially, must be of the solution."

Governor Patrick joined with Jane Doe and members of the domestic violence prevention community at the State House to participate in the 2nd Annual White Ribbon Day in Massachusetts. The White Ribbon campaign encourages men to help stop violence against women in their communities and throughout the world. Governor Patrick asked men to join him in taking the White Ribbon Pledge to stop violence and promote respect and safety in our communities.

Lieutenant Governor Murray, who chairs the Governor's Council to Address Sexual and Domestic Violence, met with teens from LUK, Inc. in Leominster to discuss their partnership with Battered Women's Resources, Inc., and their work to address issues of dating violence in the community. The event highlighted the commitment made by the young men who took the White Ribbon Pledge to stand up against violence against women.

"We have a responsibility to lead the fight against domestic and sexual violence against women," said Lieutenant Governor Murray. "This type of violence doesn't only impact the victim; it takes a huge toll on children, families and communities. I am proud to be here today to take the White Ribbon Pledge and to announce the law enforcement guidelines that will help us better address domestic violence."

The Patrick-Murray Administration released updates to the Massachusetts Policy for Law Enforcement Response to Domestic Violence guidelines. The Governor's Council to Address Sexual and Domestic Violence, established by Governor Patrick in June 2007, revised the guidelines to lay out clear and consistent recommendations for law enforcement officers who may respond to domestic violence situations. Efforts to train new police recruits and veteran officers are also underway through federal funding under the "Grants to Encourage Arrest" program.

The Massachusetts Policy for Law Enforcement Response to Domestic Violence was first authorized and promulgated in 1991 and last updated in 2002. The updated guidelines were reviewed by a team of municipal and state police, state- and community-based victim services providers and other experts in the domestic violence field. The updated guidelines include "best practice" revisions regarding the importance of determining the "dominant aggressor," the critical nature of not asking victims about their immigration status, and dealing with children on the scene.

An updated copy of the Massachusetts Policy for Law Enforcement Response to Domestic Violence was sent to law enforcement professionals, victim service providers and other community based organizations in an effort to ensure that everyone involved with victims of intimate partner violence will be met with the same clear set of procedures.

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